

MEETING OF THE CASE COMMITTEE
MARCH 8, 1966

Present:	Mr. Schein	Mrs. Rosenberg	Miss Dickson
	Miss Duffy	Mrs. Warren	Mrs. Casey
	Mr. Black	Miss Voigt	Mr. Kilduff
	Mr. Baldwin	Mr. Leese	

This meeting was devoted to the presentation of a program within the Family Service Assn. of Nassau County which reaches out to youth and families in a slum-ghetto. The paper was presented by Dr. Ambrosino, Executive Director of the agency at the P.S.A.A. Biennial Meeting in Detroit in November. Dr. Ambrosino will be the principle speaker at the New Jersey Council of Family Agencies Board-Staff Institute which will be held April 28th at the Holiday Inn in Princeton.

Mr. Kilduff summarized for the committee the three principle areas of activity outlined in the paper.

One, the Youth Service Project, a multi-service program to combat social problems, physically housed in the basement of a housing project in the poorer section of this area known as Freeport. The facility is known as the Family Community Center, financially supported for the activity, after exhaustive efforts, in 1962 in a contract with Nassau County and the New York State Division for Youth. To create the Youth Service Project 50% of the budget being financed by the N. Y. Division for Youth, 25% by Nassau County and 25% by Family Service Assn. In 1963 and 1964, a part of Family Service Assn.'s share was supported by grants from the Vincent Astor Foundation. The contract directed Family Service Assn. to provide preventive and remedial services to Freeport youth and their families in distress, the slum-ghetto having number one priority.

As anticipated, the problems of youth and families were found to be so extreme, pervasive and inextricably related to the social problems and institutions of the community that it was difficult to know where to pinpoint service to attain the greatest gain.

Primary emphasis is the motivation of youth and families to utilize opportunities for education, employment and social advancement.

The second emphasis is social action, the participation of the ghetto community in the vital decisions of Village life.

Some of the programs of the Family Community Center, which today serves about 325 children between the ages of 5 and 18 are the "Fun and Learn Clubs" and the "Thinking Skills Project" which is an experimental group work program designed for culturally deprived children to overcome their defenses. A most distinctive feature of the Youth Service Project is that casework is not an adjunctive service but is meshed in completely with all the services offered and includes consultation to the nursery school, group work projects, social action group, and shared responsibility with group workers to plan and conduct a variety of parent education meetings.

The Thinking Skills Project led to the development of a tutoring program. An evaluation of this program in June 1965 showed that most of the 75 children receiving help advanced in their social and/or academic adjustment. The tutoring program uses a great many volunteers, teachers, social workers and college students.

The second emphasis of the Youth Service Project has been the organization of a neighborhood action group of parents and teen-agers to spotlight social problems and obtain remedial actions with the assistance of appropriate resources.

In 1964, Family Service Assn. was encouraged by the Ford Foundation to stimulate the creation of a community development organization in Freeport as a model for other suburban areas. This objective has been the third major emphasis of the Youth Service Project. It was realized in 1965 with the establishment of the Freeport Community Progress, Assn. Inc., a broad-based committee of 60 influential Freeport citizens. The Board of Directors is composed of strategic persons including the Mayor, School Supt. and President of the Chamber of Commerce.

What are the overall accomplishments, measured against four years of work and the expenditure of over one-quarter million dollars? We are convinced the investment is bringing economic returns in the form of reduced dependency and greater citizen productivity, as well as greater happiness and fulfillment to the youth and families served. In general, the atmosphere of apathy and despair is lifting and is giving way to a more realistic appraisal of present-day opportunities and the efforts required to exploit them.

The most telling index to mark the impact of the Youth Service Project is the sharp reduction in the school drop out rate. In 1960-63 the drop out rate was 80%. In 1964-65 it was reduced to 15%, the same as for the white population, and the number of high school graduates from the target community has more than doubled. Of the 34 high school graduates from the area in the last three years, 25 or 70% have been active in the Community Center.

At the conclusion of the meeting, there was interest expressed by members of the Board present in attending the Board-Staff meeting on April 26th and hope expressed that other members of the Board would also be able to attend. The meeting will be from 2 to 6 p.m.

(Mrs) Peggy Cassy